

MARINES FROM THE TRENCHES

Apprenticeship Program Certifies Military Experience

Story by Cpl. Jennifer Brofer
MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT PARRIS ISLAND, S.C.



▲ **MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif.** – Lance Cpl. Lisa Brubaker, combat lithographer, Combat Visual Information Center, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, prepares a military teaching manual using a heavy-duty stapler. The lithographer occupational specialty is eligible for the USMAP certification.

Photo by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

Active duty Marines and sailors who are considering a career in their present occupational field when they transition out of the military may be able to get their experience certified.

United Services Military Apprenticeship Program is a program available for enlisted personnel serving in the armed forces. USMAP is a registered apprenticeship program that awards job certification to individuals through documented on-the-job training in a particular military trade or skill area.

To qualify for the program, applicants must be an active duty enlisted Marine, sailor or coast guardsman; have a high school diploma or GED; be designated in a job specialty, rating or military occupational specialty; and meet the registration requirements for that particular trade.

Service members enrolled in the program must complete a required number of hours, ranging from 2,000-10,000, and chart them daily in a work experience logbook. Three members within their chain of command must sign the completed logbook. After they have completed their required number of hours, participating service members are awarded with a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship by the Department of Labor.

Service members can be certified within 124 different skill areas, such as refrigeration mechanic, photographer, dental assistant, aircraft mechanic, computer programmer and legal secretary, to

name a few. Nearly 260 occupational specialties are covered under USMAP trades employing apprenticeships.

"Sailors working at the dental clinic might consider apprentice trades such as dental assistant or dental laboratory technician," said Jan Wilson, education services specialist for the Depot Education Office.

The program originated in 1976 as the Navy's National Apprenticeship Program, according to its Web site. In 1999 and 2000, the Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard, respectively, became active partners in the program. Since its inception, the USMAP has awarded more than 24,000 journeyman certificates.

For the Marine Corps, the program is available to all enlisted personnel, whether they have a college degree or not, and also helps Marines become more marketable for future employment once they transition out of the Corps.

The length of on-the-job training varies from one to four years and up to 50 percent credit may be awarded to service members based on rank and prior work experience in the applicable trade.

Sgt. Rachel Pereira, a career retention specialist for H&S Battalion here, is about 1,190 hours shy of earning her counselor certificate, which requires 4,000 total hours. One of the reasons she signed up for the program in January 2004 was because "it's one more thing to add to my resume."

Earning certification through the program is easy because you are getting credit for the job you are already doing.

"It's very easy. You just have to be disciplined enough to log in your hours," added Pereira. "I plan to use it to go into Human Resources when I retire, so I'll definitely use this."

The program is free and requires no off-duty hours. Participants receive national recognition as Department of Labor apprentices with documented proof of work experience, and Department of Labor-registered apprentices are sought after by employers, Wilson said.

For a complete list of USMAP approved trades or to fill out an application online, visit their Web site at www.cnet.navy.mil/usmap/aboutusmap.html. **M**



▲ **AL ASAD, Iraq** – Sgt. David L. Van Bever, weather observer and native of Paramus, N.J., releases a weather balloon to determine the height of the clouds over Al Asad May 3. Weather observers and forecasters from Marine Wing Support Squadron 271 support the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) by providing and tracking weather patterns and data. Weather observer is one of the MOSs eligible for USMAP certification.

Photo by Cpl. Rocco DeFilippis

"It's one more thing to add to my resume."



Helicopter Mechanic Sets Sights on Osprey

By Sgt. Juan Vara, AL ASAD, Iraq



▲ King reinstalls the tunnel cowling of a UH-1N Huey after daily and turn-around inspections of the tail rotor drive shaft March 12. King recently re-enlisted and will make a lateral move to become an MV-22 Osprey mechanic, taking advantage of a tax-free bonus and helping the Corps shift a skilled mechanic to work on its newest aircraft. Photo by Sgt. Juan Vara

Staff Sgt. Roger W. King won't let anything slow down his future. Even with a hectic schedule keeping helicopters flying in Iraq, he makes the time to plan the course of his career.

He re-enlisted March 11 with the MV-22 Osprey in mind.

A helicopter mechanic assigned to Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron 269, currently in Iraq supporting the mission of the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) during Operation Iraqi Freedom, King has served in the Corps for eight years and re-enlisted for four years and 11 months more.

Once the Gravette, Ark., native completes his tour in Iraq he'll report to the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training at Marine Corps Air Station,

New River, N.C., to become an MV-22 flight line mechanic. In this job King will work on several of the Osprey's components, such as flight controls, engines, rotors and fuel systems.

"I think it's a great move for a Marine who has been in the aviation field for some time to make a lateral move to become an Osprey mechanic," said Sgt. Rodrigo A. DiazColoma, HML/A-269 career retention specialist and Bay Shore, N.Y., native. "He has a lot of experience fixing aircraft. This move benefits the Marine Corps and the Osprey program."

The Osprey will be the fourth type of aircraft on which King has worked since joining the Corps in 1997. Before working on the UH-1N Huey and AH-1W Super Cobra, he was a CH-46E Sea Knight mechanic assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 365 at

MCAS New River.

In June 2002, King joined the "Gunrunners" of HML/A-269, where he trained for five months to become a Huey and Super Cobra mechanic. When he reported to the Naval Air Maintenance Training Marine Unit, Camp Pendleton, Calif., for Cobra and Huey training, he completed all tests and received all certifications in just two days.

"My grandfather was a door gunner in Vietnam, so I always wanted to make my way over to the Hueys and Cobras," said King. "I've done it and I want to move on to see what the Marine Corps can do for me or what I can do for it."

King said he wants to spend a few years in his new job and submit the paperwork to be considered for appointment to warrant officer. A warrant officer is a technical officer specialist who performs duties that require extensive knowledge, training and experience with particular systems or equipment.

"If the Corps doesn't see fit to promote me to warrant officer then I'll keep marching on as far as I can in the enlisted side," King said.

DiazColoma said King's decision to re-enlist and become an Osprey mechanic will have a ripple effect among other aircraft mechanics and will increase the retention of experienced maintainers.

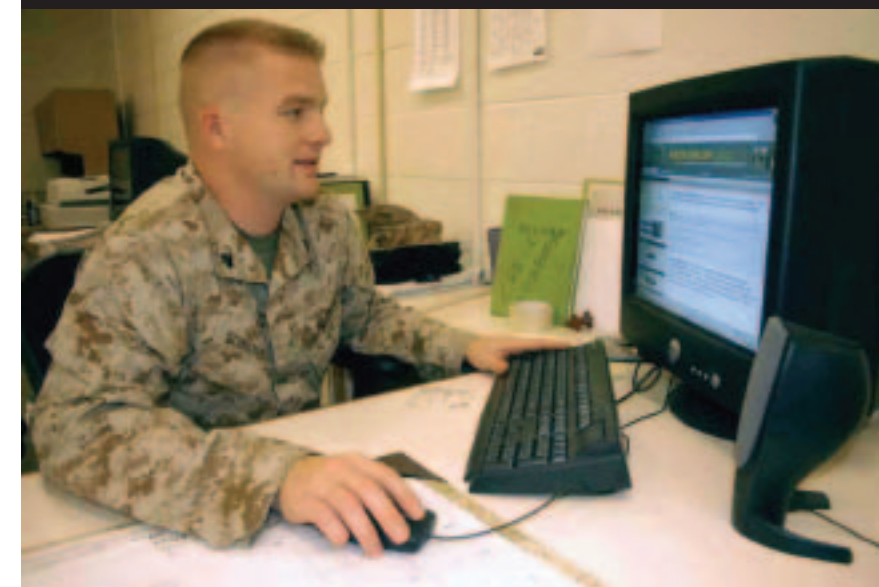
"The Marine Corps is transitioning to the Osprey and the future leaders of our Corps should move in that direction," DiazColoma said. "Why would anyone not make this move to better their career?"

King may not be the first Marine to make this career move, but by re-enlisting here in Iraq he's pocketing a tax-free bonus of more than \$12,000 and by making the lateral move he's increasing the chances of reaching his goal to become an officer.

"The Marine Corps only helps those who help themselves," King says. "If you're not goal oriented and (don't) set goals for yourself then you're just sitting on the sidelines." ■

Marine For Life Program Helps Marines Springboard to Civilian Life

By Pfc. Kamran Sadaghiani, MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz.



▲ Schuster, finance technician, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, surfs the Marine For Life Web site, www.M4L.usmc.mil, looking for available job listings. The Web site helps Marines who are departing the Marine Corps find jobs in the civilian sector. Photo by Pfc. Kamran Sadaghiani

For some, leaving the green machine is a tough transition. New frontiers, facing the unknown, and trying to make sense of a whole new world can get dicey. But with the help of the Marine For Life program, Marines leaving the nest can get access to dedicated occupational guidance and job-hunting expertise for a much smoother entrance into the civilian sector.

Because of M4L's easy accessibility, it allows any Marine to take advantage of the program's many amenities, said Staff Sgt. Jeffrey N. Guevarra, career retention specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron.

Cpl. Corey W. Schuster, finance technician, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, is one of many Marines taking advantage of the assistance M4L has to offer.

"It's really easy to use," said Schuster.

M4L assists with employment networking, adult education information, temporary lodging and housing information, military issues and benefits information and links to Web sites that provide help in creating a professional resume.

M4L also offers help for Marines to translate military terminology so their resumes are more understandable to employers, said Schuster.

These benefits make an easier transition for Marines by giving them many opportunities for success with the hundreds of jobs listed on the M4L Web site, said Guevarra.

M4L also helps Marines get jobs related to their military occupational specialty, so they can use the skills they learned in their prior job, explained

Guevarra. Getting a job related to the applicant's MOS will allow them to put all their years of experience in the Corps to good use, he said.

Marines can start searching jobs by registering with M4L on www.M4L.usmc.mil.

After Marines make contact with M4L, program applicants are set up with representatives from the regions of the country where they plan to relocate and are notified of employment opportunities in their region, explained Guevarra.

"My representative has been nothing but helpful," said Schuster. "He's put me in direct contact with the human resources in the company I've applied

(to work) for."

The job listings available on the M4L Web site are for companies specifically looking for Marines because of their reliability, and many of the company owners are former Marines, Guevarra said.

The transition to a civilian job can be tough, but with jobs that have former Marine employees, it is a lot more comfortable, said Schuster.

"I have the peace of mind knowing that I'm going to work with people that have the same work ethic," said Schuster. ■

"I think it's a great move for a Marine to make a lateral move to become an Osprey mechanic."





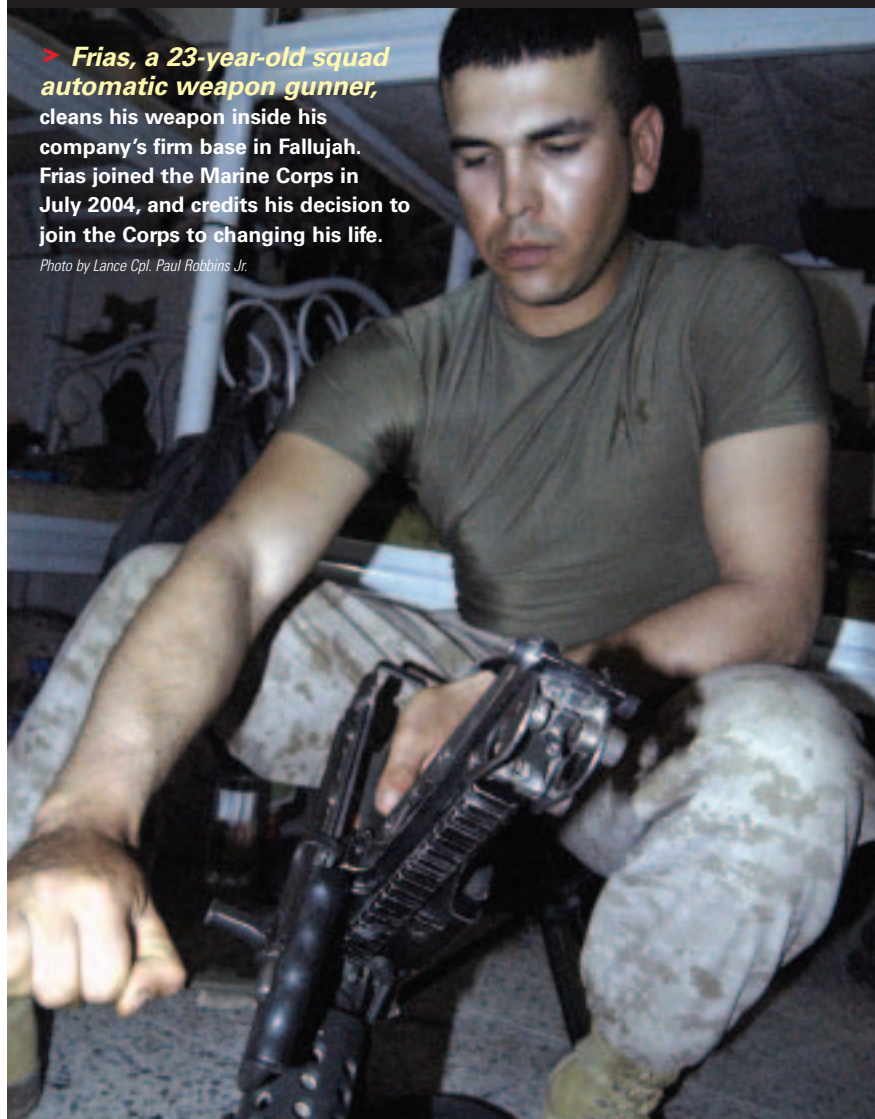
Corps Helps Change Destiny

3/4 Marine Turns Life Around in Corps

Story by Lance Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr., FALLUJAH, Iraq

> Frias, a 23-year-old squad automatic weapon gunner, cleans his weapon inside his company's firm base in Fallujah. Frias joined the Marine Corps in July 2004, and credits his decision to join the Corps to changing his life.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.



Nothing would alter his decision. Not the pleas of his parents or the challenges that lay ahead.

Something had to change and he knew just how to do it.

Lance Cpl. Manuel Frias, a 23-year-old squad automatic weapon gunner with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment,

was not always the meritorious Marine he is today.

A high school drop-out at the age of 17, Frias spent nearly five years in his hometown of Los Angeles working dead-end jobs and partying.

"I wasn't going anywhere," Frias said, "I was becoming fat, lazy. I was totally indecisive."

Time dragged on for Frias as one job replaced another: grocery store bagger, gas station attendant, cashier.

During the 40 or more hours he worked in a week, Frias attended continuation school in an attempt to salvage his education; but, like his jobs, schools came and went.

"I started at one continuation school, then stopped, later started another," Frias explained, "Then I turned 18 and had to start attending an adult continuation school..."

Realizing the pattern, Frias looked to find a way to turn his life around and get back on track.

It didn't take him long to remember an idea he had struggled over shortly after dropping out of high school.

"I had been thinking about joining the Marines around the time I dropped out. I just didn't," Frias said.

With renewed purpose, Frias set out to enlist in the Marine Corps.

"I thought it was a good place for me to be," Frias said.

Frias attended and graduated from Westchester Emerson Adult School early in 2004, joining the Corps shortly after. Since then, Frias has been meritoriously promoted to lance corporal and has deployed to Iraq with his current battalion in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The Marine Corps has made me physically and mentally stronger, more disciplined and showed me how to help myself," Frias said.

He is the first Marine in his family and has won over his previously skeptical, now proud parents, Frias said.

"Not everyone can say they've done what I have," Frias said. "We're here helping these people."

His battalion operates in Fallujah to stabilize and secure the once terrorist-ridden city for the citizens of Iraq. Frias has completed three months in Fallujah, and is scheduled to return to the States by this summer. **M**

> COLUMBIA, S.C. – Staff Sgt. Sean Flores, a recruiter with Recruiting Station Columbia speaks with high school students about the benefits of enlisting.

Photo by Sgt. Eric Lucero



Recruiting duty is rarely referred to as a cakewalk, but most Marines who've been down that road will affirm their experiences have been highly rewarding.

A tour on recruiting duty can increase a Marine's competitiveness for promotion and provides a break from a Marine's military occupational specialty. More importantly, recruiters help shape the future of the Corps by ensuring there are new generations of Marines to join the Corps' ranks.

Headquarters Marine Corps conducts two Headquarters Recruiter Screening Team visits annually to meet the manpower requirements of Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Three HRSTs from HQMC traveled to stateside and overseas installations April 4-15 to finalize the screening of Marines pre-qualified for recruiting duty. The teams

Marines Wanted for Recruiting Duty

By Staff Sgt. Marc Ayalin
MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COMMAND, Quantico, Va.

for those fully qualified for independent duty such as recruiting.

Marines deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Marines in the following MOSs were exempt from the screening process: 02xx, 0321, 0511, 2336, 26xx, 43xx, 55xx, 68xx, 7372 and 84xx. With operational tempo a high priority throughout the Corps, the intent is to minimize any operational impact during the HRST screening process.

Now that the HRST tour is complete, MMEA will issue orders to Marines who were screened and found fully qualified for recruiting duty.

A tour on recruiting duty does more than enhance a Marine's career and make him or her more competitive for promotion. The other benefits for recruiters are just as enticing. For example, recruiters receive \$450 a month in special duty assignment pay – highest of all SDA pay; they are nondeployable for three years and can apply for a duty station preference upon the successful completion of their tour.

"Recruiting duty is one of the most rewarding jobs in the Marine Corps," said Gunnery Sgt. Allen R. Gilly, recruiting monitor, MMEA, Quantico. "I think successful recruiters must have a genuine passion for the Marine Corps. If they do, it will reflect in their recruiting effort."

For more information regarding the recruiter screening process contact your local career retention specialist. **M**

"The Corps has made me stronger, more disciplined and showed me how to help myself."



Immigrant Rises to Corps' Challenge

Becomes Top Grad of Fox Company

By Lance Cpl. Dorian Gardner
MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO

At 13, he left the Ukraine with his mother and sister. At 18, he became a U.S. Marine, graduating April 8 with the highest distinction.

Pfc. Anton Chumak made a tough decision to join the Marine Corps. He persuaded his recruiter to get him out of Grand Junction High School in Grand Junction, Colo., and into boot camp as soon as possible, even if it meant missing his own graduation.

When Chumak was 8, his father died. After losing his father, Chumak was alone and his mother worked all day. "He had no guidance, nobody to look over him," said his mother, Valentina Jensen. "He needed discipline."

He found the right path in America. "I came home, told my mom I was going to the Military Entrance Processing Station the next day," said Chumak. "She tried to talk me out of it. I told her this is what I needed to do."

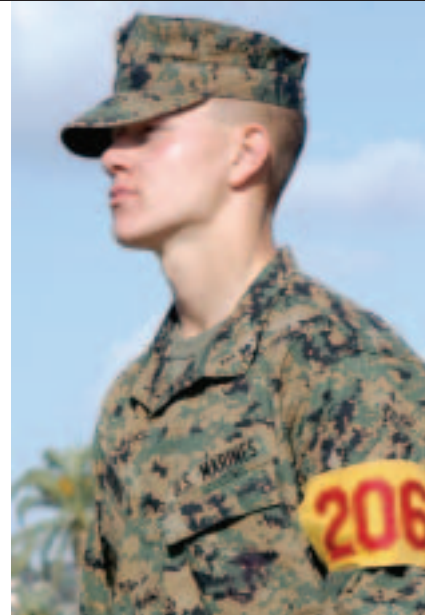
Chumak's stepfather had a different reaction to his decision.

"I was happy because I knew it was what he needed," said stepfather Ronald Jensen. "The Marines would give him discipline and direction."

Not long after, Chumak found himself in the receiving barracks of Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. With utter chaos around him, the 5-foot-6-inch recruit had only one thing in mind – to get out of this place.

"I wanted to quit," said Chumak. "I thought that this is what the Marine Corps was going to be like. I felt like a piece of property."

During the first days of recruit training, recruits take an initial strength test. This helps the drill instructors understand what the recruits are capable of. It was the IST that got his drill instructors' attention, according to Staff Sgt. Jayson J.



A Chumak said he was a leader in high school before he became Platoon 2061's guide. Chumak is one of many legal immigrants that join the Corps every year. Although many Marine Corps specialites do not require U.S. citizenship, an applicant must be a legal immigrant (with a green card), residing in the United States, to join the Corps. Once an immigrant enlists in the Marine Corps, normal residency requirements are waived and they can apply to become a United States citizen after 3 years of active duty. U.S. citizenship is required to become a commissioned officer.

Photo by Pfc. Carlos Chavez

Clifton, senior drill instructor, Platoon 2061, Company F.

"He started as a squad leader just from his IST score," said Clifton.

As a squad leader, Chumak experienced his first days of boot camp through a different perspective. It wasn't long before Chumak shook the notion of wanting to quit boot camp.

"It was when my senior (drill instructor) called us into his office and actually talked to us like human beings," said Chumak. Eight days later, Chumak was promoted to the highest position a recruit can attain in a platoon, guide, a position Chumak reluctantly accepted.

"The guide we had was too sweet to the platoon. He couldn't get loud and the senior didn't like that," said Chumak. "I didn't think I was ready to be a guide."

Chumak's senior drill instructor let him know right away that in boot camp, the drill instructor will decide his ability, according to Chumak.

"I've talked to him about being a leader, how they are decision makers," said Clifton.

Fortunately for Chumak, he had filled leadership roles in high school.

Chumak said he had a hard time fitting in as a foreign student, but as things became easier for him, he began to notice the people around him had the same struggles. He was involved in a leadership program that helped new freshmen and students like him settle in seamlessly, according to Chumak.

Chumak, who speaks with a slight Ukrainian accent, said public speaking humbled him. "After I went through that program, I was able to get up in front of people and not care about being embarrassed."

He doubted he was ready to be the guide of recruits, but others believed he was made for the part.

"He was very proactive in having the platoon finish (instead of) just himself," said Clifton. "The drill instructors let me know he grasped the aspect of teamwork."

Nevertheless, being guide was still overwhelming at times. "There were a few times when I doubted myself," said Chumak. "I would try my hardest to make things happen, then run into a brick wall and nothing would happen. There were times when I wanted to get fired but I never wanted to quit."

When Chumak finally accepted his role as a leader, he decided to be the best guide at the depot. He was an expert rifleman, and just missed scoring a perfect physical fitness test score by a few seconds on the run. Going to the series and company honor man board in front of senior drill instructors and company staff members, Chumak outshined the other guides and was selected as honor man, the company's highest recruit honor.

His stepfather was not surprised with Chumak's performance.

"I knew he could do it. He had the ability, and all he had to do was use it," said Jensen. ■

A Smart Marine is a Good Marine

By Lance Cpl. Joshua C. Cox
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C.



A The Marine Corps Institute, in conjunction with the Marine Corps College of Continuing education, offers many opportunities for Marines seeking higher-level education and job training skills. Photo by Lance Cpl. Joshua C. Cox

tion purposes. Overall, the combined efforts of the Marine Corps Institute in association with The Marine Corps College of Continuing Education offer an estimated 800 courses.

The course work is not just a book and a test. Material is interactive and gets Marines involved throughout the instruction. MarineNet, MCCCE's online learning network that provides Marines with access to both military and civilian education programs, provides some online courses. These courses include an animated mentor to coach students and further explain the curriculum.

On the MarineNet Web site, members can check individual records, enroll in courses, preview courses, complete course work and get questions answered via the online helpdesk.

These courses can be used for a wide variety of multipurpose training, predeployment training and required annual training. The Marine Corps College of Continuing Education is also available to deployed Marines around the globe. The program provides deployed units with portable learning resource centers that Marines can use for study while overseas.

Many of the courses have an added benefit beyond the acquisition of knowledge. Some convert into college credits by the American Council on Education, some provide Marines valuable information for their careers, and all can provide points for promotion.

For more information on continuing education and the Marine Corps, visit www.marinenet.usmc.mil or www.mci.usmc.mil. ■

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